

Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project
DEIS Public Comment Summary: March 31, 2004 – June 1, 2004

Introduction

Replacing the 51-year old Alaskan Way Viaduct and 70-year old waterfront seawall is a critical state, regional, and national need. Both facilities have deteriorated and are vulnerable to earthquakes. More than 100,000 vehicles use the viaduct daily, moving goods and freight through Seattle and workers to downtown and other job centers. Thousands of ferry riders, business owners, employees, and tourists walk along the waterfront every day.

In consideration of these needs, more than 75 replacement concepts were evaluated. Ultimately, five alternatives were selected for environmental review: Rebuild, Aerial, Tunnel, Bypass Tunnel, and Surface.

The Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) on March 31, 2004. The public comment period was 60 days, ending on June 1, 2004.

The project team will review and respond to the comments in the Final EIS.

Public Comment Opportunities

Over 830 individuals, businesses, community groups, tribes, and public agencies submitted 665 comment letters on the Draft EIS (some comment letters had multiple signatures and covered multiple topics). A complete summary of how the public was notified of the opportunity to comment is attached.

In addition to the public outreach for the Draft EIS, information on how to receive copies of the Draft EIS was distributed to every environmental justice group the project has contacted.

The public was provided multiple avenues to submit comments. The project team held three public hearings on April 27, 28, and 29. The public hearings were held throughout the project corridor, one each in the north, central, and south areas. The northern hearing was held at the Leif Erickson Hall in Ballard, the central hearing at the Dome Room in Downtown Seattle, and the southern hearing at Lafayette Elementary School in West Seattle. A court reporter was available to transcribe oral comments. Paper and electronic comment forms were available as well.

The public could also comment on the project Website, through the project hotline, or by mailing a comment to the project office. Each comment was entered into the project's comment database. When entered, comments were categorized by alternative and/or topic.

A breakdown of how comments were submitted is below.

Comments Submitted Via...	Number of Comments
E-mail	77
Online comment form	327
Hotline	19
Mail	90
Leadership Group open house	3
Public hearing comment form	82
Public hearing computer	28
Public hearing court reporter	38

Summary of Public Comments

This summary is divided into two sections. The first section consists of major themes from the public comments, regardless of a specific alternative. The second section consists of comments submitted on each alternative, including why commenters preferred or did not prefer a specific alternative.

In general, three major themes were heard from the public comments:

- Out of comments that cited a preference for a specific alternative the Tunnel Alternative was the most favored because it provides the best opportunity to connect the waterfront to downtown, redevelop the waterfront with public open space, and maintain traffic through the corridor.
- The second most favored alternative was the Rebuild, because it maintained the current traffic capacity, connections to the rest of the corridor, and views while driving on the viaduct.
- Regardless of which alternative was favored, the public was most concerned about construction, and requested more information about how construction detours and impacts to residents and businesses will be addressed.

Summary of Common Themes

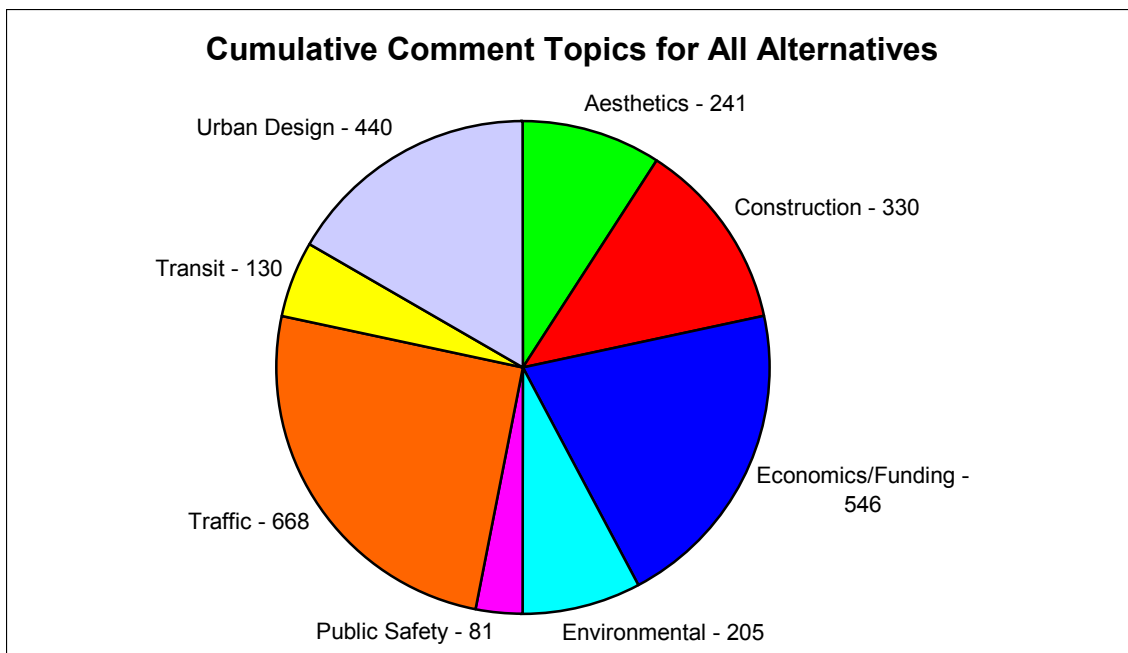
Without mention of a specific alternative or regardless of which alternative was preferred, public comment subjects most frequently focused on construction and final build conditions. The most frequent comments within these two areas are detailed below:

Construction:

- The public was primarily concerned about the length of construction and the possible affects it could have on the surrounding areas.
- The public also expressed an interest in how the construction length could be reduced if the corridor was closed to traffic during construction.
- The public wants to know how traffic will be handled during construction. Closing the corridor to traffic during construction, or maintaining some traffic capacity during construction were two opposing sentiments expressed in many comments.
- The public is interested in maintaining access to homes and businesses. Businesses along the waterfront and outside the corridor expressed an interest in knowing how freight vehicles and customers will gain access to businesses during construction.
- Many members of the public noted the detrimental effects of construction on businesses and residential properties along the project corridor. Comments expressed a desire for more analysis of the economic impacts of construction for each alternative.

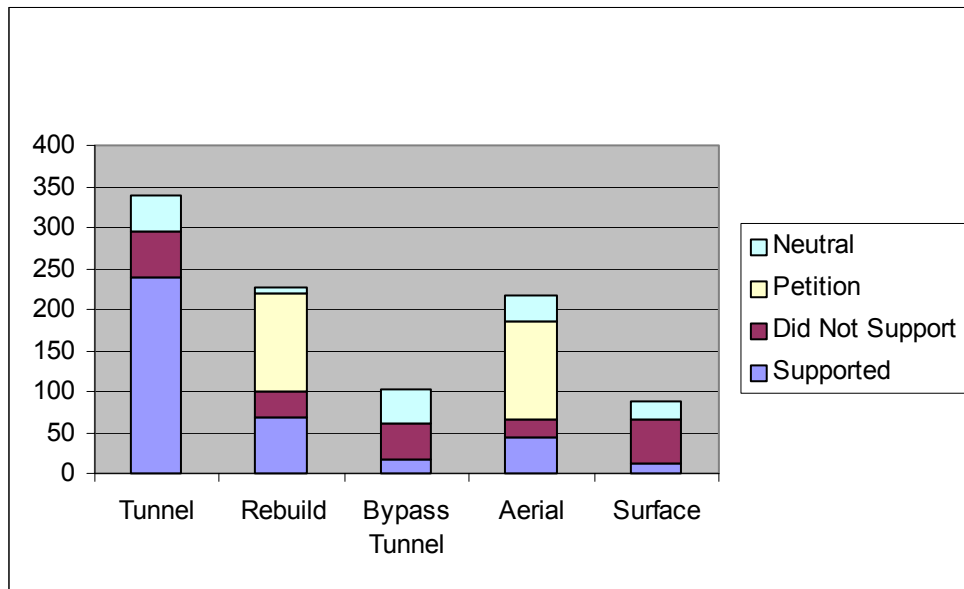
Build Condition:

- The public expressed an interest in having traffic capacity maintained in the final build condition.
- The public is interested in the future of the waterfront, with or without a viaduct, and how parks, bicycle paths, promenades, and parking could be integrated into the surface design.
- The public expressed an interest in further information about the potential economic impacts of each alternative on the surrounding project corridor.



Summary of the Alternative Comments

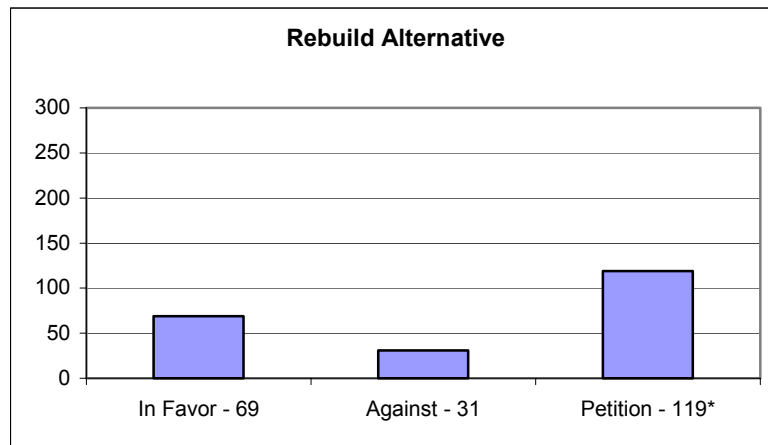
The summary of comments submitted for each alternative is below. The total number of comments for each alternative includes any comment that referenced that specific alternative. The bar charts and information for each alternative focus on comments that were specifically in favor or against that alternative. Neutral represents comments that referenced the alternative, but did not take a position. The petition category represents the 119 signatures of residents from Magnolia and Ballard in favor of the Rebuild or the Aerial Alternatives.



Rebuild Alternative

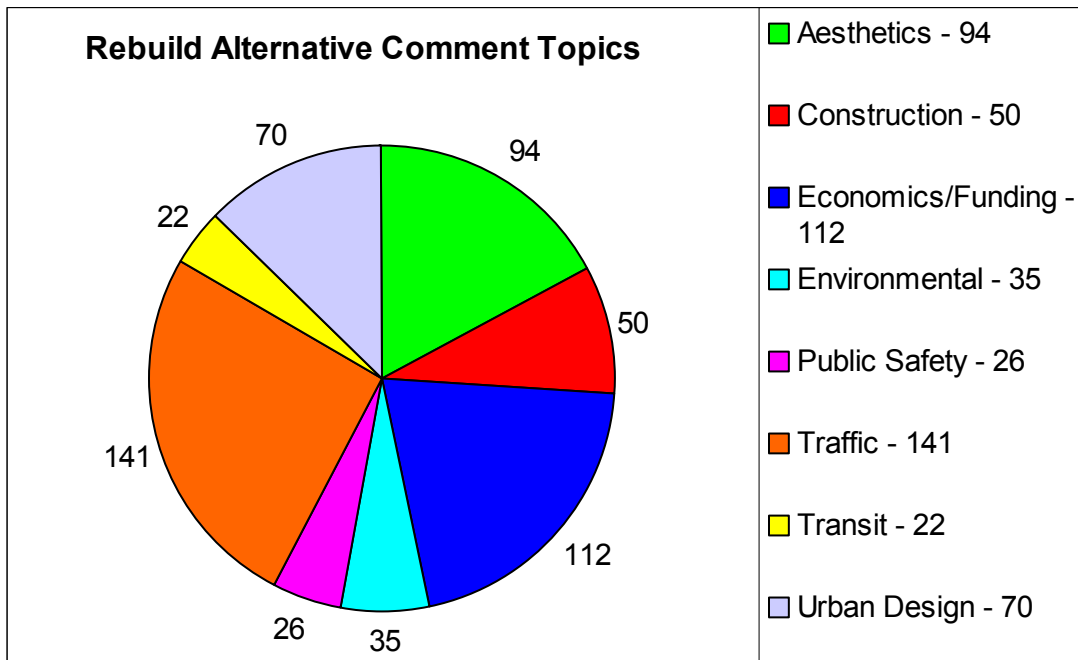
There were 228 people who commented on the Rebuild Alternative.

- 69 spoke in favor of the Rebuild Alternative because:
 - The ability to maintain the views while driving on the viaduct.
 - The alternative retains the current traffic capacity.
 - Connections to downtown from the north and the south corridors are maintained.
 - The lower cost for replacement.
- 31 spoke against the Rebuild Alternative because:
 - The rebuild structure maintains the division between downtown and the waterfront.
 - The alternative maintains the visual obstruction of the current aerial structure.
 - The noise pollution on and around the waterfront is unchanged from the current conditions.
- 9 referenced the Rebuild Alternative but did not express a clear preference for or against.



*The 119 signatures on a petition from residents primarily from Magnolia and Ballard was in support of either the Rebuild or the Aerial Alternative.

The chart on the following page details the topical breakdown of comments submitted regarding the Rebuild Alternative. The comment topics in the charts below are groupings of smaller more specific comment categories. The categories that make up each topic are listed below the chart.



- Traffic – traffic, connections/circulation, pedestrian, bicycle, freight
- Economics/Funding – cost, funding, economic issues, displacement, relocation, property values/acquisition
- Urban Design – urban design, land use/zoning, parks/green space,
- Construction – construction, utilities, seawall
- Aesthetics – visual quality, views while driving
- Environmental – noise, air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, soils and sediments, habitat
- Public Safety – earthquake, public safety
- Transit – light rail, monorail, transit, high occupancy vehicles, high capacity transit

Aesthetics

Of the 94 comments about aesthetics for the Rebuild Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The view from the viaduct is the best in the area and would be maintained with the Rebuild Alternative.
- A rebuilt aerial structure would maintain the visual obstruction along the waterfront.

Construction

Of the 50 comments about construction for the Rebuild Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- How traffic will be maintained during construction.
- The length of construction.

Economics/Funding

Of the 112 comments about economics/funding for the Rebuild Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- The cost is least of any alternative that maintains capacity.

Environmental

Of the 35 environmental comments about the Rebuild Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Recommended methods for improving water and air quality as well as reducing noise pollution.

Public Safety

Of the 26 public safety comments about the Rebuild Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Improves the earthquake safety standards of the viaduct structure.
- With less traffic on Alaskan Way, a safe pedestrian environment would be maintained.

Traffic

Of the 141 comments about traffic for the Rebuild Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The traffic capacity of today is maintained.
- Connections to the northern and southern corridors would be maintained.

Transit

Of the 33 comments about transit for the Rebuild Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Connections for transit service into downtown would be at least maintained if not improved.

Urban Design

Of the 70 comments about urban design for the Rebuild Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Maintaining parking underneath the viaduct.
- Retaining connections to surface streets in the north, south, and downtown.
- Lack of opportunity to improve the design of the waterfront.

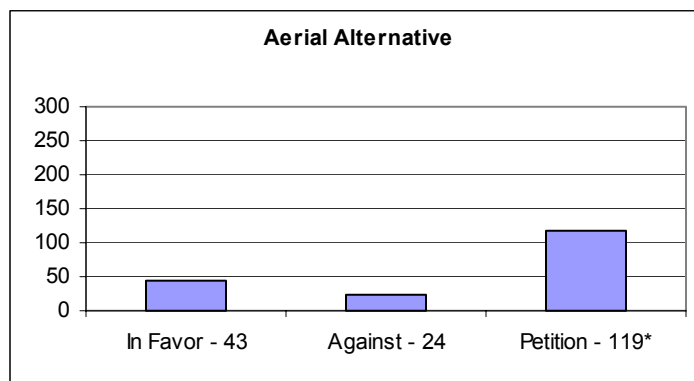
The following agencies, organizations, or elected officials support the Rebuild Alternative. The project team understands that organizations represent multiple citizens and sub-organizations and has taken that into account when reviewing and evaluating the comments.

- Ballard Interbay North Manufacturing Industrial Council
- North Seattle Industrial Association
- Mary Lou Dickerson – Washington State House of Representatives, 36th District
- A petition in support of the Rebuild Alternative was submitted with 119 signatures, most of who were residents of Ballard and Magnolia.

Aerial Alternative

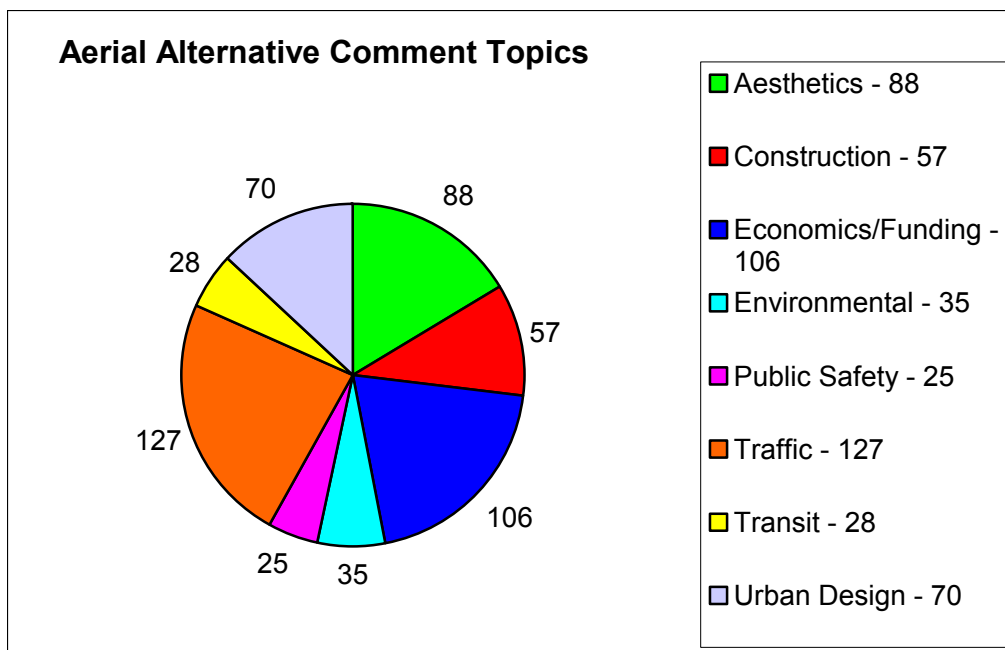
There were 218 people who commented on the Aerial Alternative.

- 43 spoke in favor of the Aerial Alternative because:
 - The ability to maintain the current views while driving on the viaduct.
 - With a widened structure, traffic capacity would be at least maintained if not improved.
 - The design of the new structure includes wider lanes and shoulders making the corridor safer for drivers.
 - Connections to downtown from the north and the south corridors are maintained.
- 24 spoke against the Aerial Alternative because:
 - The increased width of the aerial structure creates even less open space on the waterfront.
 - The temporary aerial structure during construction will have adverse impacts on the waterfront.
 - The aerial structure maintains the division between downtown and the waterfront.
- 32 referenced the Aerial Alternative but did not express a clear preference for or against.



*The 119 signatures on a petition from residents primarily from Magnolia and Ballard was in support of either the Rebuild or the Aerial Alternative.

The chart on the following page details the topical breakdown of comments submitted regarding the Aerial Alternative. The comment topics in the charts below are groupings of smaller more specific comment categories. The categories that make up each topic are listed on the following page.



- Traffic – traffic, connections/circulation, pedestrian, bicycle, freight
- Economics/Funding – cost, funding, economic issues, displacement, relocation, property values/acquisition
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- Construction – construction, utilities, seawall
- Aesthetics – visual quality, views while driving
- Environmental – noise, air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, soils and sediments, habitat
- Public Safety – earthquake, public safety
- Transit – light rail, monorail, transit, high occupancy vehicles, high capacity transit

Aesthetics

Of the 88 comments about aesthetics for the Aerial Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The views from the current aerial structure would be maintained in the Aerial Alternative.
- A new aerial structure increases the visual obstruction along the waterfront while decreasing the view space.

Construction

Of the 57 comments about construction for the Aerial Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The temporary aerial structure during construction disrupting the waterfront for an extended period of time.
- The length of the construction period for this alternative.
- Construction mitigation around businesses and residents in the project corridor for the extended construction period.

Economics/Funding

Of the 106 comments about economics/funding for the Aerial Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- The cost remains the lowest of the alternatives that maintain capacity, while providing standard lane widths and shoulders.¹

Environmental

Of the 35 environmental comments about the Aerial Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Recommended methods for improving water and air quality as well as reducing noise pollution.

Public Safety

Of the 25 public safety comments about the Aerial Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Increased lane widths and shoulders provide for safer driving on the aerial structure.

Traffic

Of the 127 comments about traffic for the Aerial Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Maintaining or improving the traffic capacity and circulation of the current structure.
- Connections to the northern and southern corridors would be maintained.

Transit

Of the 28 comments about transit for the Aerial Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Connections for transit service into downtown would be at least maintained if not improved.

Urban Design

Of the 70 comments about urban design for the Aerial Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Decreases the amount of open space along the waterfront because of the increase in structure width.
- The Aerial Alternative does not change the connection between downtown and the waterfront.
- The addition of full lane widths and shoulders to a new aerial structure.

The following agencies and organizations support the Aerial Alternative. The project team understands that organizations represent multiple citizens and sub-organizations and has taken that into account when reviewing and evaluating the comments.

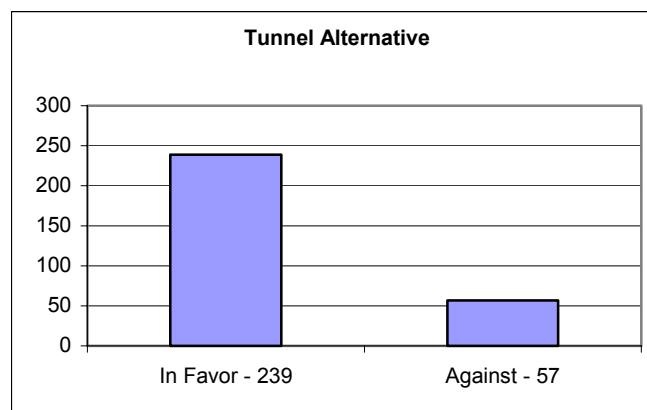
- Admiral Community Council
- Ballard District Council

¹ This is the sentiment of the comments. Please note that the Aerial Alternative is not the lowest cost alternative that retains capacity. The Rebuild Alternative is the same cost and also maintains capacity.

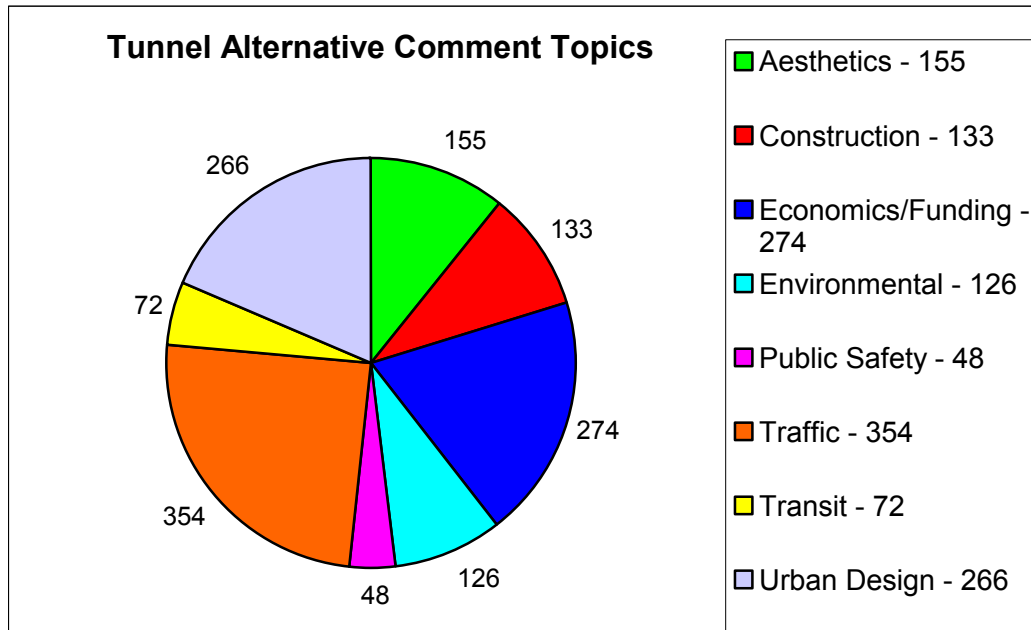
Tunnel Alternative

There were 340 people who commented on the Tunnel Alternative.

- 239 spoke in favor of the Tunnel Alternative because:
 - The opportunity to remove the aerial structure and redevelop the waterfront without traffic and noise.
 - Creating a connection between downtown and the waterfront while maintaining traffic capacity to and through downtown.
 - Providing a safer environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders along the waterfront.
 - The long-term benefits for the waterfront and the City are worth the higher cost.
- 57 spoke against the Tunnel Alternative because:
 - The cost of the full tunnel alternative and where the funding will come from.
 - The dislike for driving or being stopped in traffic in tunnel structures.
 - Removes the views currently enjoyed while driving on the current viaduct.
- 44 referenced the Tunnel Alternative but did not express a clear preference for or against.



The chart on the following page details the topical breakdown of comments submitted regarding the Tunnel Alternative. The comment topics in the charts below are groupings of smaller more specific comment categories. The categories that make up each topic are listed below.



- Traffic – traffic, connections/circulation, pedestrian, bicycle, freight
- Economics/Funding – cost, funding, economic issues, displacement, relocation, property values/acquisition
- Urban Design – urban design, land use/zoning, parks/green space,
- Construction – construction, utilities, seawall
- Aesthetics – visual quality, views while driving
- Environmental – noise, air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, soils and sediments, habitat
- Public Safety – earthquake, public safety
- Transit – light rail, monorail, transit, high occupancy vehicles, high capacity transit

Aesthetics

Of the 155 comments about aesthetics for the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Removes the visual obstruction created by the current aerial structure and creates a new opportunity for waterfront views.
- Provides an opportunity to redesign the appearance of the waterfront with parks and open spaces, making it a visual destination.

Construction

Of the 133 comments about construction for the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The length of the construction duration and the disruption to the project corridor.
- Retaining some access to and around the waterfront for businesses and the public.
- Loss of parking, increased traffic and noise on the waterfront during construction.

Economics/Funding

Of the 274 comments about economics/funding for the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The long-term benefits are worth the extra cost of this alternative.
- The cost of this alternative is not affordable.

Environmental

Of the 126 environmental comments about the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Recommended methods for improving water and air quality.
- Reduction of noise and air pollution by eliminating the aerial structure.

Public Safety

Of the 48 public safety comments about the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Increased lane widths and shoulders provide for safer driving.
- Some comments expressed a concern about safety in tunnel structures.

Traffic

Of the 354 comments about traffic for the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Maintains traffic capacity without adding extra traffic to Alaskan Way.
- Takes traffic off the waterfront, reducing noise and air pollution and opening up the waterfront.
- Allows for safer pedestrian and bicycle traffic on Alaskan Way.

Transit

Of the 72 comments about transit for the Tunnel Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Possibility for new transit service along Alaskan Way, i.e. expanded streetcar service.

Urban Design

Of the 266 comments about urban design for the Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Removing the aerial structure provides the opportunity to redevelop the waterfront and create a connection to downtown.
- Opportunity for new public open space along the waterfront.
- Pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections could be made to and along the waterfront.

The following agencies, organizations, or elected officials support the Tunnel Alternative. The project team understands that organizations represent multiple citizens and sub-organizations and has taken that into account when reviewing and evaluating the comments.

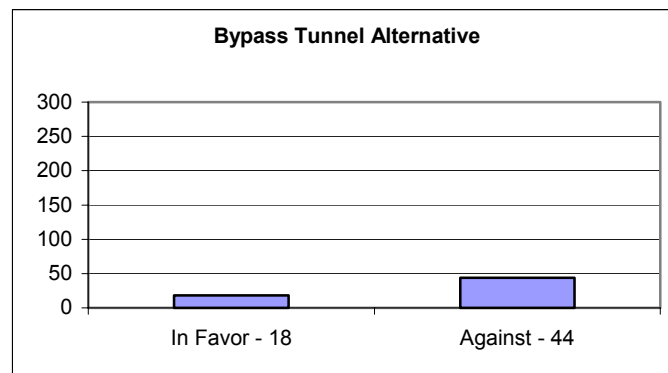
- Kikiallus Nation
- Seattle Aquarium Society
- Pioneer Square Community Association

- Allied Arts
- Historic Seattle Preservation
- BOMA Seattle King County
- Downtown Seattle Association
- Duwamish Planning Committee
- Port of Seattle
- Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce
- Action Better City

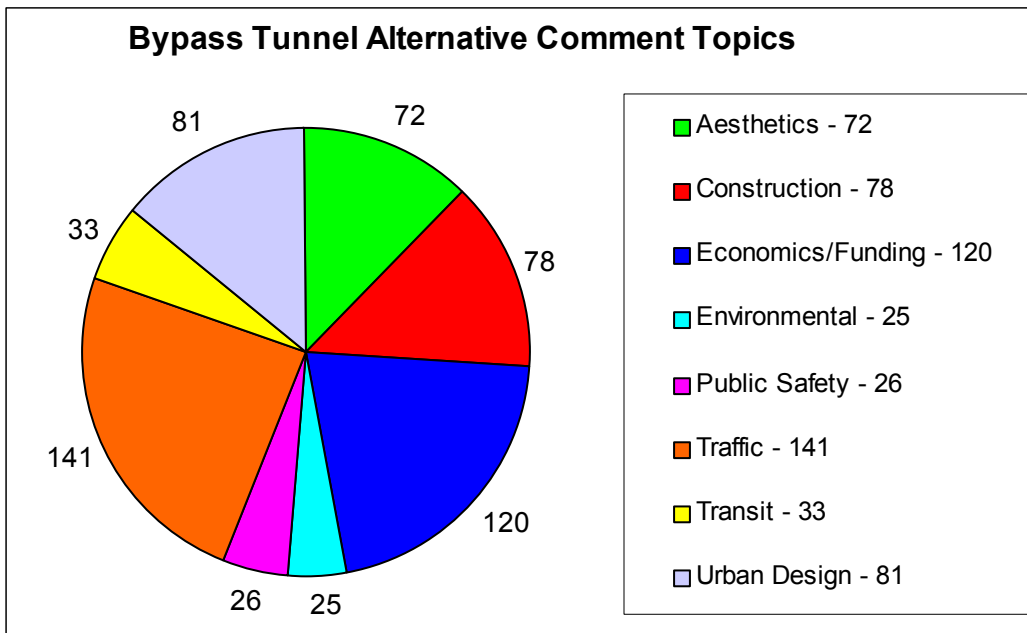
Bypass Tunnel Alternative

There were 103 people who commented on the Bypass Tunnel Alternative.

- 18 spoke in favor of the Bypass Tunnel Alternative because:
 - The majority of traffic is placed below the surface while the cost is lower than the full six-lane tunnel alternative.
 - Removing the physically and visually obstructive viaduct and providing the opportunity to make a more citizen friendly waterfront.
- 44 spoke against the Bypass Tunnel Alternative because:
 - The dislike for driving or being stopped in traffic in tunnel structures.
 - Access to and from the north of downtown is much more limited than the current configuration.
 - Increased traffic on Alaskan Way.
 - Overall question about safety and security of a tunnel structure.
- 41 referenced the Bypass Tunnel Alternative but did not express a clear preference for or against.



The chart on the following page details the topical breakdown of comments submitted regarding the Bypass Tunnel Alternative. The comment topics in the charts below are groupings of smaller more specific comment categories. The categories that make up each topic are listed on the next page.



- Traffic – traffic, connections/circulation, pedestrian, bicycle, freight
- Economics/Funding – cost, funding, economic issues, displacement, relocation, property values/acquisition
- Urban Design – urban design, land use/zoning, parks/green space,
- Construction – construction, utilities, seawall
- Aesthetics – visual quality, views while driving
- Environmental – noise, air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, soils and sediments, habitat
- Public Safety – earthquake, public safety
- Transit – light rail, monorail, transit, high occupancy vehicles, high capacity transit

Aesthetics

Of the 72 comments about aesthetics for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Removes the visual obstruction created by the current aerial structure and creates a new opportunity for waterfront views.
- Eliminates the views of the surrounding area for drivers.

Construction

Of the 78 comments about construction for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- The length of the construction duration.
- Retaining some access to and around the waterfront for businesses and the public.
- How traffic is handled during construction.

Economics/Funding

Of the 120 comments about economics/funding for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- This is a more cost effective tunnel solution.

- Comments against this alternative cited the high cost of tunnels in general.
- Impacts to surrounding businesses after construction with the changes to the waterfront design.

Environmental

Of the 25 comments about environmental for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Recommended methods for improving water and air quality as well as reducing noise pollution.

Public Safety

Of the 26 comments about public safety for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- With the increased traffic on Alaskan Way comments expressed a concern about the safety of the waterfront for the public.

Traffic

Of the 141 comments about traffic for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Increased traffic on Alaskan Way.
- Traffic stoppages within the tunnel.
- Increased travel times, especially traveling to and from the northern corridor.
- Changes to connections between the industrial areas in the northern and southern corridors.

Transit

Of the 33 comments about transit for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Increase in transit options to accommodate traffic increases on the waterfront.

Urban Design

Of the 81 comments about urban design for the Bypass Tunnel Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

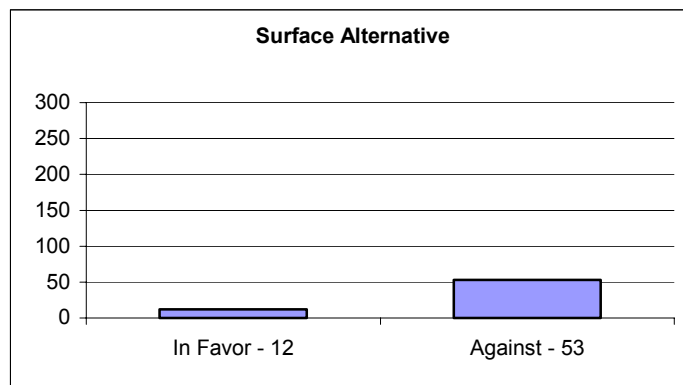
- Removing the aerial structure provides the opportunity to redevelop the waterfront and create a connection to downtown.
- The increase in traffic on Alaskan Way could hinder the design options for developing the waterfront.
- The replacement of parking that exists under the viaduct.

There were no agencies, organizations, or elected officials in support of the Bypass Tunnel Alternative.

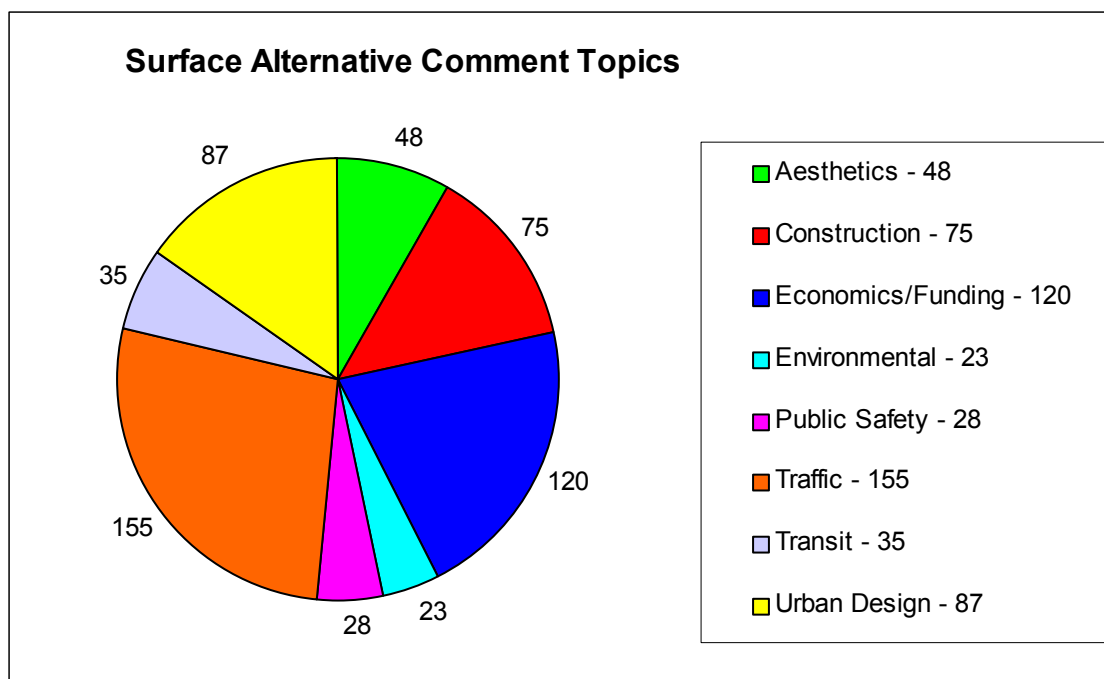
Surface Alternative

There were 89 people who commented on the Surface Alternative.

- 12 spoke in favor of the Surface Alternative because:
 - The construction duration is the shortest of all the alternatives.
 - The cost is the lowest of all the alternatives.
 - This may be the only alternative that can be funded.
- 53 spoke against the Surface Alternative because:
 - The Surface Alternative would add a great deal of traffic to Alaskan Way, preventing it from becoming a redeveloped public destination.
 - The through traffic connection is compromised with this alternative.
 - The increase in traffic would decrease the ability for the public to use the waterfront safely.
- 65 referenced the Surface Alternative but did not express a clear preference for or against.



The chart on the following page details the topical breakdown of comments submitted regarding the Surface Alternative. The comment topics in the charts below are groupings of smaller more specific comment categories. The categories that make up each topic are listed on the following page.



- Traffic – traffic, connections/circulation, pedestrian, bicycle, freight
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- Aesthetics – visual quality, views while driving
- Environmental – noise, air quality, water quality, fish and wildlife, soils and sediments, habitat
- Public Safety – earthquake, public safety
- Transit – light rail, monorail, transit, high occupancy vehicles, high capacity transit

Aesthetics

Of the 48 comments about aesthetics for the Surface Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Removes the visual obstruction created by the current aerial structure, as well as the view for drivers.

Construction

Of the 75 comments about construction for the Surface Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- The length of the construction duration.

Economics/Funding

Of the 120 comments about economics/funding for the Surface Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- The cost is the least of all the alternatives and may be the only affordable option.

Environmental

Of the 23 comments about environmental for the Surface Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Recommended methods for improving water and air quality as well as reducing noise pollution.

Public Safety

Of the 28 comments about public safety for the Surface Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- With the increased traffic on Alaskan Way comments expressed a concern about the safety of the waterfront for the public.
- This would be the safest alternative in event of an earthquake.

Traffic

Of the 155 comments about traffic for the Surface Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- Increased traffic on Alaskan Way and a decreased capacity for trips through downtown.
- Creates a major traffic corridor in the middle of the waterfront.
- Improve the connections and circulation of traffic throughout the corridor to better accommodate for the traffic that would use the viaduct.
- Safe connections for the public on the waterfront with the increased traffic on Alaskan Way.

Transit

Of the 35 comments about transit for the Surface Alternative the following issue was the most frequently raised:

- Increase in transit options to accommodate traffic increases on the waterfront.

Urban Design

Of the 87 comments about urban design for the Surface Alternative the following issues were the most frequently raised:

- With the increase in traffic there is a roadway increase from four lanes currently to six lanes.
- Parking under the viaduct would be lost.

There were no agencies, organizations, or elected officials in support of the Surface Alternative.

No Replacement

There were 87 comments advocating the study of a ‘No Replacement’ alternative. The public in favor of this alternative asked that an alternative be studied in the EIS that removes the viaduct without replacing it with a similar capacity structure. Their comments called for a surface road installed on Alaskan Way with no more than four lanes. These members of the public also asked that improvements be made to entire area transportation system including, improved arterial connections, improvements to Interstate 5, and increased transit service. In favor of this new alternative, proponents cited the following issues in support:

- Lower cost than any of the proposed alternatives.
- Removes traffic from the waterfront corridor
- Provides the opportunity to recreate the connection of the waterfront to downtown and install parks, pedestrian and bicycle areas.
- Least amount of construction time and impact to the corridor.

The following agencies, organizations, or elected officials support at least the study of the No Replacement alternative in the Final EIS. The project team understands that organizations represent multiple citizens and sub-organizations and has taken that into account when reviewing and evaluating the comments.

- People for Puget Sound
- People’s Waterfront Coalition
- Peter Steinbrueck – Seattle City Council
- Seattle Planning and Design Commission

No Alternative

There were 127 comments submitted that did not comment on a specific alternative. These comments focused on specific issues of the Draft EIS and did not advocate for or against any alternative.

Environmental Justice

The project has made a significant effort to inform and engage environmental justice populations in the project development and Draft EIS comment period. Interviews with environmental justice organizations and populations were conducted in and around the project corridor. Community briefings were made to environmental justice populations to better inform them about the project. Through this outreach, contact information was compiled and used to distribute information about the Draft EIS and the comment period. More detailed information about environmental justice outreach is captured in the *Environmental Justice Public Outreach Summary Report*. Input received from organizations and individuals representing environmental justice populations during the Draft EIS comment period are summarized below.

Casa Latina Day Worker’s Center

Board members, workers, and staff from the Casa Latina Day Worker’s Center expressed two specific needs for the project:

- 1) Assistance in relocating the Day Worker’s Center to a location near the downtown corridor and near to a major transportation arterial.
- 2) Preference given to construction companies employed by this project that hires or pledges to work with Casa Latina.